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Rural Schools as Nutrition Centers for DEFENSE

Rural Electrification Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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THE fact that nutrition is one of America's great defense problems has been realized since the President's National Nutrition Conference for Defense was held in Washington last May. The problem, specifically, is how to get to the millions of Americans who need them, more of the "protective" foods, the foods rich in vitamins and minerals.

The Rural Electrification Administration proposes to make a contribution to the solution of that problem through the 10,000 rural schools located along its 300,000 miles of power lines. We are undertaking to help the schools to function as nutrition centers. Conferences for the working out of procedures recently have been or shortly will be held in all of the 10 REA administrative regions.

Many of these schools will, this year, participate for the first time in the school-lunch program which many urban schools have carried on for some years. This offers an

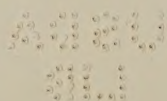
excellent opportunity for REA cooperatives to help in the establishment of nutrition centers that can serve their communities in many important ways.

Electricity is an important factor in the production of more of the "protective" foods needed in the National Nutrition for Defense program. It is also important in the processing, preservation, and preparation of these foods.

Electrical food preparation equipment in rural schools will make it easier to provide satisfactory hot lunches for the boys and girls on whose healthy growth depends the future of our Nation. It will also make these rural schools more serviceable as educational and demonstration centers where children and adults can gain practical knowledge about better nutrition for defense and how to make it effective. A school provided with suitable equipment can, in fact, serve as a

President Roosevelt:

"THE FULL ENERGY OF EVERY AMERICAN IS NECESSARY!"



food conservation and processing center for many families in the rural community. And in case of disasters and emergencies, whether caused by the elements or of man-made origin, such schools can more efficiently be used to house and feed groups of needy persons.

REA has good reason to believe that the various agencies and organizations concerned with nutrition and defense at Federal, State, and local levels will welcome the establishment of food preparation centers in rural schools wherever possible, and will arrange to make extensive use of them. Virtually the same local groups that usually sponsor school-lunch programs will also be responsible for making the Nutrition for Defense program effective. These include school boards, public health and welfare officials, parent-teacher associations, home economics teachers, agricultural extension workers, service clubs and fraternity organizations, chambers of commerce, women's clubs, and church societies. Both programs are also aided by WPA, NYA, Surplus Marketing Administration, and other Federal agencies which, in the past, have frequently given substantial assistance to the school-lunch program.

A rural school equipped with suitable facilities will be the rallying point for community meetings on nutrition and other matters of civic importance. It will give the farm families in the neighborhood a better idea as to how electricity can be used economically

an REA-financed system are eligible to apply to the system for electrical equipment financing under section 5 of the Rural Electrification Act. REA co-ops are urged to give all possible assistance to such rural schools in the planning of facilities and in the purchasing and installation of suitable equipment for food conservation and preparation.

The kind of installation feasible in a particular school will, of course, depend on its size, the number of pupils and the grades it includes, available space, and the financial ability of the community to pay off the cost of equipment within the required period.

A small, one-room school could quite effectively start off with a single-unit hot plate, an 18-quart roaster, and a small flour mill using a fractional horsepower motor. The total cost of these three items need not exceed \$50 and can probably be kept considerably below that figure. This equipment would permit the school to provide hot lunches without fire hazard, to carry on canning demonstrations and classes for youth and adults and to put up canned foods for school lunches, to grind its own whole-wheat flour, grits, and various kinds of meal, and to bake its own whole-wheat bread, rolls, and cookies. The little mill can even be made available to the pupils' families for grinding their own "protective" flour and meal.

If more can be spent for equipment, an electric refrigerator will be useful not only in preserving perishable food but in making

Vice President Wallace:

**"ON A FOUNDATION OF GOOD FOOD WE CAN BUILD ANYTHING.
WITHOUT IT WE CAN BUILD NOTHING"**

and effectively for food conservation and preparation. Some of its equipment can be made available to some extent to low-income families in the community which cannot afford to own such equipment themselves.

Rural schools getting electric service from

the lunches more palatable and more varied. An electric range will greatly simplify the cooking and baking problem and provide additional facilities for acquainting pupils and parents with modern methods of preparing food so that it retains the maximum of food

Dr. M. L. WILSON,
Director of the Agricultural Extension Service
and Chief of Nutrition Defense:

"We are pledged to the proposition that no one in this great democracy shall starve even with hidden hunger and we are faced with the fact that 40 percent of our people have poor and inadequate diets."

Gen. LEWIS B. HERSHEY,
Acting Director, National Selective Service System:

"It has been estimated that perhaps one-third of the men rejected (in the draft) were rejected because of defects due either directly or indirectly to nutritional deficiencies."

Dr. THOMAS PARRAN,
Surgeon General of the
United States Public Health Service:

"Less than one-fourth of us are getting a good diet."

Dr. HENRY C. SHERMAN,
of Columbia University:

"Better growth and development, high attainment in stamina and working efficiency, and a longer lease of healthier and more useful life may all be realized in the same individuals through the fuller use of the newest knowledge of nutrition."

value and of flavor. If the school has running water, an electric water heater might also prove very useful.

A slightly bigger flour mill, while costing a little more money, will grind flour even better and faster and can be of greater service to the neighborhood.

Where conditions warrant, the school could add a walk-in refrigerator with a zero box and a dehydrating unit, thus providing really effective facilities for the preservation of meats, fruits, and vegetables for the school and, to some degree, for the rural community. Such equipment will benefit the school and community not only during the present emergency period but will prove of permanent value to farm families as a tool for better living.

It is hoped that REA co-op boards will authorize and urge their managers and other technically trained employees to act as advisers and to give practical assistance to school boards and other sponsoring groups interested in setting up electric food-preparation centers in schools being served by REA-financed lines. Such help is quite within the functions of the co-ops and is desirable both as a community service and as a patriotic duty in furtherance of our national defense efforts.

The National Nutrition Conference for Defense was one of the most important conferences ever called by a President of the United States. Its keynote was the need of more protective foods by millions of Americans. By this program, the nation may be brought appreciably nearer the goal.

Consolidated school (left) and one-teacher school (right), these buildings are typical of hundreds in which nutrition for defense will be developed

